

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 10, 2023

The Honorable James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Comer,

On February 1st, 2023, you dedicated your first hearing as Chairman of the Oversight Committee to focus on fraud in COVID pandemic aid programs, stating, "We must identify where this money went, how much ended up in the hands of fraudsters or ineligible participants, and what should be done to ensure it never happens again."

I write to raise your attention to a clear example of such fraud that should be immediately investigated: the alleged fraudulent application and receipt of unemployment benefits by Republican Congressman George Santos.

Today, Representative Santos was charged with Theft of Public Money from taking pandemic unemployment benefits while he was still employed.

According to the unsealed indictment filed in the Eastern District of the State of New York, "Beginning on or about June 19, 2020, and continuing through on or about April 15, 2021, Devolder Santos certified his continuing eligibility for unemployment benefits on a weekly basis, in each case falsely attesting, inter alia, that he was unemployed, available to take on new work, and eligible for benefits. In truth and fact, however, beginning on or about February 3, 2020, and continuing through on or about April 15, 2021, Devolder Santos was a Regional Director at Investment First #1."

"For the period on or about and between March 22, 2020 and April 15, 2021, based on a false application and false weekly certifications to the NYS DOL, the defendant George Anthony Devolder Santos received approximately \$24,744 in unemployment insurance benefits, which were deposited into Devolder Santos Bank Account #2. The benefits received by Devolder Santos were fully funded by the United States and a department and agency thereof, to wit: The United States Department of the Treasury."

It is ironic that the same week Representative Santos is being indicted for unemployment fraud, you are pursuing legislation on the House Floor that would send surprise bills to workers who receive accidental overpayment through no fault of their own.

As a Member of the Oversight Committee, and given your stated interest in pandemic fraud, I ask:

- Will the Committee hold a follow-up hearing regarding pandemic funding to review Representative Santos' pandemic unemployment fraud?

Thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert Garcia", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Garcia
Member of Congress